

## [Mr. Enrique Pendas]

26063

### LIFE HISTORY

of

### MR. ENRIQUE PENDAS

I was born in the province of [Asturiae?] in the year [1865?]. The town in which I was born is so small that it does not appear on any map of Spain. I am about as old as Christopher Columbus, who discovered the new world only because of the grit of the [?] brothers. Columbus was at a total lose when his compass needle no longer marked a due west course.

I went to Cuba when still very young, and was completely amused with the beauty of this land. It has a wonderful fertility, yielding three crops a year, a thing that no other land in the world can equal. And above all is the hospitality of its people who are always [?], and trying to please. Where else can one find these qualities? It is a [?] nature in them.

I do not consider myself only Spaniard, but a Spanish American, as all these republics in South America have the blood of Spain in their veins: they are the true daughters of Spain. We are not Latins, as many in this community would like to call us. We are all Spanish Americans, and there should not be any distinction between us. We are all brothers in blood as well as in characteristics.

When I was in New York I had a private teacher, who was one of the most learned [men?] that I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. He could speak and write many languages.

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I remember saying to him one time, that the Spanish language was more expressive than the English, and he told me:

“What is there more beautiful than this passage in English: The twittering of the birds, the cooing of the doves.” However, he said this with so much expression that it really seemed that you were hearing the 2 birds and the doves.

I remember also a friend of mine who was a socialist. In those days I mixed up in everything. The day previous to the elections I was with him in a building where there were four speakers talking for him, each speaker in a separate window. It was raining and thundering, but the crowd remained there listening. I remained in the building until early hours of the morning. [?] the votes were finally counted, he had received [66,000?] votes.

Just before establishing our factory in Tampa, I went to [Key?] West and remained there eight months. Our factory, [Lozano?] Pendas & Co., was finally established here on [?] 15th, [?], when I was 22 years of age. I remember that when I established the factory here, I [?] employment to nearly all the workers of [?] & [Maya?]. I have always treated the cigar-makers as human beings, not as animals. I thoroughly understand their nature.

I founded the [? ?] de [Tampa?] (Spanish Club), and although I hold number 1 as being its first member, I have retired from the club altogether. They have sent committee after committee to get me to go back, but I have principle in my life. The reason for this action of [?], if you must know, is that the [Centro Espanol?] gave a reception to the former Cuban President, Mr. [? ? ? ?]. (1) They acted like dogs that lick the hand that whips them.

(1) This [resident enforced?] the [50%] law in Cuba, whereby 50% of all employees had to be Cubans (native). There are a considerable number of firms owned by Spaniards whose employees are all Spaniards, and this meant that they had to throw out half of their employees and place Cubans in their place. There were also several acts of violence against the Spaniards during the [Presidency?] of Mr. [Grau?].

Another thing that the [Centro Espanos?] did, which is not in keeping with my [principles?] is the following: When the [Spanish?] Ambassador came to Tampa, a reception was held in his honor at “[El Passaje?]” restaurant. The first to speak was the president of the Centro Espanol. He got up and spoke in English — a very rotten English at that. [When?] the Ambassador was called upon to speak, and he also continued [speaking?] in English. Then they called upon me to speak, I got up, grabbed my hat, and sent everybody to H—. Then I walked out.

It is unbelievable that a [Spanish?] representative should come to a Spanish colony and [have everyone trying?] to speak a [language?] which they do not know, when they have the most beautiful [language in the world?] at their finger's tip, as you might say. I have my principle: what my reason dictates is right, and I pursue that course [to the end?], irrespective of the obstacles that stand in my way.

When the manufactures and cigar-makers arrived in Tampa, they found nothing but a stinking hole with swamps and pestilence everywhere. [When?] we first arrived here, what little we found, in what was called Tampa, could not even be called a [village?]. [We?] made not only what Tampa is today, but the whole state of Florida. There were only a very few thousand souls in all the State. [We?] gave it life and placed it on the map of the United States. This State [owes?] everything to us.

There were no women in Tampa in those days. I would go to [Franklin Street?], and would stand there hour after hour, but could not see a single woman.

[Then?] the beautiful [?] of the Centro Asturiano was built, Mr. Torres, then president of the Club, found himself in a complete [dilemma?] 4 with reference to the medical body. He was not equal to the task before him. He fell sick and I took complete charge of the matter. [Then?] he recovered I has already organized the hospital.

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I remember that one of my cigar-makers was Mr. V. M. [Balbontin?]. (1) He was a very bad cigar-maker, but he was a very intelligent man. I took a fancy to him and set him up in a barroom, at which business he made a complete success.

Mr. [? ? ?] was raised in [?] City. As a boy he was always among us. He has not forgotten his friends. He attends all the social functions of the different clubs in Ybor City. When he first ran for Mayor of Tampa, I was his chief supporter, and I myself placed him as Mayor of Tampa.

Peter C. Knight is another one of the "strong men" in Tampa, who visits all the Latin clubs on Christmas Day, and then winds up by visiting me at my home.

Every year I make substantial donations to all worthy charitable causes. However, I never give a cent to the Salvation Army or some of those other charities which keep salaried men. [When?] I give my money, I must know that it goes straight to the needy persons, not to somebody's pocket.

[When?] the terrible storm that destroyed the entire town of [Santa Crus del [?], Cuba, I immediately set a movement on foot to [?] those people. I was afterwards offered a certificate in recognition of my act, which I still hold. I also pay the quotas of many members of the Clubs, who are

(1) [Mr. Balbontin?] has always been a man of great [prestige?] in the Latin community. At one time he came to the rescue of the Spanish Club, when it was in financial [straite?] by putting thru the Gold Bonds of the Club, and sold to the members. It became, therefore, and [internal?] debt.

5

out of work. Only last week I gave a check for \$25.00 for this purpose.

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I have been in many meetings of the Cuban Club, and very many of the ones attending the meetings are Spaniards. At one of these meetings I brought up the matter of sending a committee from the Cuban Club to the officials in Tampa. Not a single one wanted to go; they were afraid. So I appointed myself the Committee and went there myself. It is absurd to be afraid of voicing your rights before those who came here after we had founded a city.

[Since?] the first societies were formed, the doctors here have been carrying on a most brutal war against them, very [similar?] to what the doctors have been doing in Cuba against the “quintas”. They are nothing but a bunch of shameless [rascals?]. At a meeting I placed [my?] sentiments into words, and told them plainly what I thought of all the doctors. I stated that at least [60%] of the people buried in the cemeteries, were killed by them.

I was afterwards told that Dr. [?], a very good friend of mine, had taken offense at this statement [of mine?]. [?] at another meeting I went straight up to Mr. Helms, and told him that I took exception with him, as there are exceptions in all cases. When I commit an error with a friend, I promptly rectify it. I am not afraid to go up to him and acknowledge my error. [However?], my accusation holds good for all the rest of the doctors.

[When?] my left arm was broken at the joint, the doctors here said it was a dislocation. They placed the joint back together, but not the broken bones. It commenced giving me pain, and the arm began to swell. I then left for Havana, Cuba, and had the bad luck to go with the president to the Centro Asturiano of Havana to his “quinta” or [?] “La Covadonga”.

6

He took me to the best specialist of the [?]. This specialist told me that my arm needed massage. I left that place in bad humor, and told that specialist several things.

I then met a friend of mine who was not a “big shot”, like the president of the Centro Asturiano. He took me to the [? ?], where they had an X-Ray apparatus, and which I believe was the only one in Havana. At that time the X-Ray had not been perfected. There

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was not a single one in Tampa. Although this X-Ray at the [? ?] was not a very powerful one, yet it showed clearly that the bone was broken.

I took this X-Ray photo to that specialist of the Centro Asturina, and showed it to him. He then said it clearly showed that the bone was broken, and it was necessary to operate and place the bone back together. I told him that it certainly needed an operation, but he was not the one that was going to operate on me. I also told him that the arm was worth more than he and the whole [Santorium?].

My friend then took me to another doctor who operated on me. As soon as my wife knew that I had to undergo an operation, she promptly left for Havana. Half an hour after the boat docked, she was at my bedside.

While in Havana I [saw?] a very strange happening, and it was this: A full blooded Spaniard has come to Cuba when very young. He married a Cuban girl. He raised a family of eight children, all born in Cuba. One day he arrived at his home feeling very [?] as he had lost his position. He was talking to his wife of how bad conditions were getting, when his eldest son got up and said: "Gallego, go back to Spain where you belong, we don't want you in Cuba." The father gave his son such a terrible blow that he had to be carried to the Emergency Hospital. A few hours later the father was on a ship bound for Spain, leaving the whole family behind.

During one of the strikes here in Tampa, I went back to my home town in Spain, thinking of seeing all my old friends and relatives. [Then?] I arrived there I found that I knew no one. There was an entirely new generation. The only one that I recognized was my sister.

I remember that upon my return, an old [?] man who had been working at my factory for many years, died. I attired myself in a tight fitting coat, and a tall top hat. It makes me laugh to think of how I was dressed when I went to this funeral.

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In these days I was alone here, without my family to look after or anything, so you can be sure that I wasn't too good. I did as I pleased.

The Union of Manufacturers here is composed of pirates of the industry. They are not human; they can only think of new ways of [?] the cigar-makers more and more. All the rules and regulations are [?].

[Rogensburg?] is not one of them, we only cooperate with them.

At one time certain rumors got about that I had said something about one of the manufacturers. This was completely false, and it made [me see?] red. At one of the Manufacturer's meetings, I got up, and very loudly said that whoever had said such a thing about me was a “[apestoso hijo de perra?]”, or if you would prefer to have it in English: A stinking son of a b—. No one got up to contest this.

Of Mr. Davis of [? Davis?] & Co., I can't say much. It is best to ignore him altogether. He wanted to have the cigar-makers produce the [?] at \$13.00 per thousand and [thought?] he could do it by threatening them. [How?] little he knows the nature of the cigar-makers! I told him 8 that he could sooner kill the cigar-makers of hunger, before they would submit to any threat.

Most of the strikes in Tampa had been originated by the “International”. In the first strike that started on June 25th, 1910, the cigar-makers demanded the recognition of the International. I headed the manufacturers in the strike which lasted seven months.

This strike was finally ended on January 26th, 1911, and although the cigar-makers lost they still had hopes of forcing recognition. [On?] April 20th, 1920, the cigar-makers again went on strike, demanding recognition of the Union. This strike lasted ten months, and I completely destroyed the “International” for all times.

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Another one of the things that was causing many of the strikes in Tampa was the tribunes.

(1) I advised the manufacturers to take out the tribunes and there would be no more strikes. These tribunes were entirely eliminated from the factories through my efforts.

The cigar [making machines?] are ruining, not only the cigar-makers, but the manufacturers as well. The factories must compete with other factories in the country. This competition is ruinous. They are even producing a very large size of cigar to retain at two for [?]. When some are producing a real small cigar in imitation of the cigarettes.

The cigarettes are also doing a great deal of harm to the cigar industry. Their production has jumped by leaps and bounds since the war. They are harmful because they have too much nicotine and opium, yet you see little kids about the streets smoking cigarettes.

(1) The tribunes at the cigar factories were the platforms where the readers stood, and read novels, newspapers, etc. to the cigar-makers. In some instances the cigar-makers would stand here and voice their grievances.

9

At one time the factory of [?] along was producing over eighty million cigars in one year. Today this former production is only a pleasant memory.

The young generation is gradually leaving Tampa. [Some?] are leaving for New [Orleans?], where they are not wanted. There are four factories there that are doing good business. [Others?] are leaving for New York, Philadelphia, New Jersey, and other parts. Only last week over 60 persons left Tampa. A [remedy?] should be found that will remedy this condition.

I do not intend to leave, however, for I have lived her practically all my life and I intend to die with the cigar industry in Tampa. Of the very first [settlers?] most of them are today in their graves, and that is the only place where I could go to see them. Only yesterday I went



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to the Myrtle Hill Cemetery to attend the transfer of the ashes of an old friend of mine. Only three or four of the real old-timers are left living today.